

VZCZCXRO5531  
PP RUEHAG RUEHROV  
DE RUEHCV #1497/01 2991425  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 251425Z OCT 08 ZDK  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2037  
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS PRIORITY  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 001497

SIPDIS

USSOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD  
DEPARTMENT PASS TO AID/OTI (RPORTER)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/23/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [VE](#)  
SUBJECT: VENEZUELA (OVER)REACTS TO EP CRITICISM, BLAMES U.S.

CARACAS 00001497 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Political Counselor Francsico Fernandez,  
Reason 1.4 (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (GBRV) strongly rejected the October 23 passage of an European Parliament (EP) resolution condemning political rights abuses in the country. Both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Assembly accused the United States ("the Empire") and European right-wing parties of trying to discredit the GBRV prior to November's state and local elections. The GBRV remains oversensitive to international criticism and continues to lash out against its detractors, without addressing substance. END SUMMARY.

-----  
The Resolution  
-----

12. (SBU) The European Parliament (EP) adopted an October 23 resolution (51 votes to 1) to condemn the GBRV's disqualification earlier this year of some 272 former and current officials from running for office based on administrative sanctions. The Comptroller's ineligible list included the opposition's best candidates in three upcoming gubernatorial races and the Caracas mayoral race. The EP resolution expressed concern about the large number of electoral disqualifications, the September 18 expulsion of senior officials of Human Rights Watch, and the October 1 murder of Zulia State student leader Julio Soto. The EP called on the Chavez government to "put an end to all such practices and foster a more participative democracy in Venezuela, in full compliance with the principles laid down in the 1999 Constitution."

-----  
GBRV (Over)Reacts  
-----

13. (SBU) The GBRV reacted harshly to the resolution. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, issued an October 23 communique labeling the resolution an intrusion into the sovereign right of Venezuela to manage its own internal affairs. The MFA categorically rejected the EP resolution as "a politically motivated distortion of an administrative procedure designed to prevent potentiall corrupt citizens from reaching public office." The MFA also accused the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) of being representatives from "th right and far-right of the political spectrum, referring instead to distract the world from theattempts of the Venezuelan Government to fight crruption and impunity."

14. (SBU) The MFA communique also accused the EP of neglecting

to pass similar resolutions against the United States "which has recently authorized the use of torture." The MFA alleged that the resolution is part of a wider U.S-directed political campaign designed to discredit Venezuela, orchestrated by an "American Empire that is unwilling to accept the changes that are occurring in Latin America". The MFA further commented that this was an "intolerant and insolent defamation on the part of the right and extreme right of Europe" and boasted that "In the history of Venezuela there has never been a government that has respected human rights more, that has favored social inclusion more, and never existed a Constitution that has respected human rights more."

15. (SBU) The MFA communiqu  also said the September 18 expulsion of Human Rights Watch officials Jose Miguel Vivanco and Daniel Wilkinson was justified because the two men violated the Constitution and laws of Venezuela by meddling in the country's internal affairs. The MFA communiqu  did not respond to the EP exhortation to bring the perpetrators of the murder of opposition student leader Julio Soto.

16. (SBU) The National Assembly formally rejected the EP resolution October 23, only hours after the EP passed it. National Assembly Vice President Saul Ortega told the parliament and media that "The decision taken against our country was taken by only 55 Members of Parliament, out of a total group of 785 Parliamentarians." He added that "we will not allow the right-wing of Europe to interfere in the internal sovereign affairs of Venezuela" The National Assembly quickly and unanimously approved a fifteen-point resolution rejecting the EP measure. The formerly pro-government Podemos Party deputies abstained.

-----  
Comment

CARACAS 00001497 002.2 OF 002

-----  
17. (C) The GBRV remains particularly sensitive to any international criticism, and overreacts in a defensive manner that only calls more attention to the criticism. Moreover, the GBRV continues to ignore the substance of such criticism and instead discredits the critic. The EP will likely be very surprised that the GBRV accuses it of being a tool of the "Empire." The EP's criticism of the Comptroller's ineligible list is well-founded as the persons on the list have had no opportunity to dispute the charges in the judiciary. The Comptroller's ineligible list is only the latest example of GBRV political discrimination and follows the use of the Tascon and Maisanta lists to reward supporters and punish opponents.

CAULFIELD